

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A thin-walled, plastic container having a body portion with rectangular sidewalls and a base wherein the body portion comprises a label mounting area, on at least two of the rectangular sidewalls, extending between an upper label bumper and a lower label bumper, the label mounting area comprising:

a rectangular vacuum panel having an upper and lower edge, and

a plurality of ribs within each panel, said plurality of ribs having either an outward or inwardly facing rounded edge ~~relative to the interior of the container~~ relative to a space defined by the sidewalls, wherein said ribs are parallel to each other and the non rounded base, said ribs extend from one side of the rectangular panel to the other, wherein said rounded edge of at least one rib is inwardly facing and said rounded edge of at least one rib is outwardly facing.

2. (Original) The plastic container of claim 1, wherein the plurality of ribs within a vacuum panel comprises an odd number of ribs.

3. (Original) The plastic container of claim 2, wherein the plurality of ribs within a vacuum panel comprises at least three ribs.

4. (Original) The plastic container of claim 2, wherein the plurality of ribs comprises at least five ribs.

5. (Original) The plastic container of claim 1, wherein the rounded edge of at least one rib is inwardly facing and the edges of the remaining ribs are outwardly facing.

6. (Original) The plastic container of claim 5, wherein the rib having the inwardly facing edge is an internal rib.

7. (Original) The plastic container of claim 6, wherein the rib having the inwardly facing edge has at least one adjacent rib with an outwardly facing edge.

8. (Original) The plastic container of claim 7, wherein the rib having the inwardly facing edge has at least two adjacent ribs with an outwardly facing edge.

9. (Original) The plastic container of claim 1, wherein the rectangular sidewalls having vacuum panels are opposite each other.

10. (Original) The plastic container of claim 9, wherein the ribs within the panel form a symmetrical pattern.

11. (Original) The plastic container of claim 10, wherein the symmetrical patterns in each panel are identical.

12. (Original) The plastic container of claim 1, wherein the container is made of PET.

13. (Original) The plastic container of claim 1, wherein the container is hot-fillable.

14. (Original) The plastic container of claim 1, wherein the base is non-rounded.

15. (Currently Amended) A plastic container having a body portion with rectangular sidewalls and a base wherein the body portion comprises a label mounting area extending between an upper label bumper and a lower label bumper, the label mounting area comprising:

a rectangular vacuum panel on at least two of the rectangular sidewalls, each said panel having an upper and lower edge, and

an odd-numbered plurality of ribs within each panel, each of said plurality of ribs having either an outward or inwardly facing rounded edge, relative to ~~the interior of the container~~ a space defined by the sidewalls, wherein said ribs are parallel to each other and the non rounded base and extend substantially from one side of the rectangular panel to the other, and wherein the rounded edge of at least one rib is inwardly facing and the edges of the remaining ribs are outwardly facing.

16. (Original) The plastic container of claim 15, wherein the plurality of ribs within a vacuum panel comprises at least three ribs.

17. (Original) The plastic container of claim 15, wherein the plurality of ribs comprises at least five ribs.

18. (Original) The plastic container of claim 15, wherein the rib having the inwardly facing edge is disposed between a pair of adjacent ribs, each of which has an outwardly facing edge.

19. (Original) The plastic container of claim 15, wherein the rectangular sidewalls having vacuum panels are opposite each other.

20. (Original) The plastic container of claim 9, wherein the ribs within the panel form a symmetrical pattern.